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## Filthy Casuals

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The induction of the Human race had been painless. The normal growing pains of a society had taught the Galactic Council that diplomacy was often the best path for first contact. So upon the discovery of a small deathworld with sentient life, a team of representatives was assembled and sent down.

Humanity was eager to meet all the races, not only eager but had longed for it. They had even written hundreds of thousands of stories about the potential for extraterrestrial life. It seemed that it was humanity's most fevered dream, to know that they were not alone in the universe. Because of this, and their nature to make friends as easily as other races purchase food, no actually bothered to look into much of their past.

The first thing that happened which sent some warning bells through the rest of the council was the rapid adoption of human slang, phrases like "The early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese" and "Trial by fire." The one that caught on the most though was "Parry this you filthy casuals." The more learned of the Council quickly realized most human slang, and their art, entertainment, literature, almost everything that humanity produced seemed to stem from war or combat of some kind.

An uproar was heard in the council chambers after one of the Yishy historians befriended a human who worked in a library, formerly known as the Library of Congress, and gained access reporting back as to what he found. The humans were monsters, beings who had taken warfare from a simple act of a developing people and turned it into an art form or a science.

The council told the humans that they would not be bothered and that any who wanted to trade with them would be allowed, but they could not continue the relationship as they had. Humanity accepted this with grace and dignity. For several generations, Humanity continued like this trading with any who wished to trade, and helping with larger galactic problems when they could.

It would be roughly twenty human generations after the council's decision to cut ties with humanity, that the Pux would be discovered, on the polar opposite side of the galaxy from humanity. The Pux were religious zealots of the highest order. Upon finding out that they were not the only race in the galaxy, they immediately set about finding the best way to systematically wipe every other race from reality.

After the first world fell to the Pux, humanity came forward. A young woman was sent, her name was Susan.

"Honored Council member," Susan said, bowing respectfully to those assembled, "Humanity asks that you allow us to help with the current issue of the Plux."

"Tell me, Representative Susan," The Yishy council member spoke, "what could humanity bring to this fight that we do not already have?"

"We have at our disposal millions of soldiers and leaders with combat experience, not to mention the generations of tactical experience that humanity as a whole has." Susan said, and the council members laughed.

"Soldiers? Tactical experience? These things do not win wars, technology is what wins wars, and our far outstrips yours." The Helvanq representative said, receiving a chorus of agreement from the other council members.

Susan simply smiled before speaking. "When you are ready for help, we will be here." And turned to leave after the council was dismissed.

As Susan strolled back to her ship she was approached by the Jooliy representative. "Ambassador Susan, do you truly have what you said?" The small furred creature said.

"Yes ambassador Halvnit, we do, why do you ask?" Susan said, smiling at the creature who looked like a living incarnation of a teddybear.

"The world that fell...It was a Jooliy world. The council will do nothing for us, and we do not wish to lose any more members of our race." Halvnit said.

"Are you asking to trade with me Ambassador?" Susan said, smiling with closed lips, as she knew that many galactic hated the sight of teeth. She nodded her head up and down hoping that the creature understood the body language.

"No, I mean..." Halvnit's ears twitched as he watched Susans head bob up and down, then he continued speaking. "...I meant Yes! Of course, trade with the humans."

"Good, please come with me." Susan said and lead the small furred creature to her ship.

Several months later, after the Plux had taken several more worlds, and the council argued over whose responsibility it was to face down the Plux legions. Halvnit sent a message to Earth, it was two words. "They Come."

The council watched the holo-screens as a view of the Jooliy homeworld was displayed, hundreds of ships bearing the mark of the Plux God were descending. And then dozens of ships that seemed to dwarf even the largest capital ships of any other race appeared from FTL. These all bore the mark of earth.

"The humans?" The Helvanq representative said. "Why would they be there?" He looked expectantly at the Jooliy representative.

Halvnit swallowed down every instinct that he had to run and hide from the sudden level of attention and spoke. "The council was taking far too long to establish a plan for dealing with the problem, so we made a trade with humanity." The way he said trade made several of the other council members shudder.

The Yishy representative narrowed its eyes. "What do you mean '*Trade*?'"

"We made a deal, that in exchange for designs for all of our current technology, and ongoing efforts of collaborative research, humanity will provide protection from all enemies of the Jooliy." Halvnit said, and the rest of the council laughed.

"Don't you think that you are overstepping yourself a little bit?" The Kiltar representative said, slapping Helvanq on the back with a hand that was almost the same size as the Jooliy representative.

"We should have you removed from the council, but at least we get to see something amusing before your dismissal." The Yishy representative said, and the rest of the council laughed.

They all turned back to the holo-screens. What unfolded in real-time, left the council speechless. Humanity slaughtered the Plux. It wasn't even a fight, within moments of the humans deploying on the field, they had assessed the situation, and deployed troops that moved with coordination that rivaled even the most advanced combat drones. Like a flood the humans washed over the Plux, leaving little more than ash and corpses in their wake.

All told it took only forty-five minutes for the humans to kill every Plox on the planet and extract the enemy ships from around the Jooliy world. Then suddenly the doors to the council chamber burst open. And in strolled five humans.

Susan stepped up in front of the four marines with her. "Council members, I am here to deliver a message, the same message has been delivered to the Plux."

"What are you doing here you have no right to speak here. You ..." The Yishy representative was cut off by the four marines crying out in unison.

"SILENCE IN THE HALL." The sound, and the volume at which it projected from the four men shocked the room into compliance.

"As I was saying, I have a message." Susan said, after casting an appreciative glance back at her escort. "It is this, when it comes to war, you are all children playing at an adult's game. To quote one of our saying that you so loved, you are all fucking casuals at it. It would be the equivalent of sending a student of the arts to do the job of a certified engineer, so to all races humanity makes this announcement."

You could have heard a feather fall at the moment that Susan took a breath. "If you attack Humanity or its Allies, retribution will be swift and decisive, if you want a crusade, we will show you the meaning of the word."

Susan turned meeting the eyes of every member as she spoke. "Humanity is here to stay, and we would love to be friends, but do not take our friendship and willingness to cooperate with your policies as weakness. Our race has a history that is filled with more bloodshed than the combined histories of every race here and we have learned from it. We have turned killing and warfare into something transcendent."

Susan paused letting it sink in. "Taken it from the baser level that you seem to think is the pinnacle of combat, and made it into a sport, made into a career, made it into a way of life. So we warn you now, you are not prepared for the level and means of destruction and death that humanity has mastered, come to us in need of help and you shall receive it, come to us for trade, and you will be traded with fairly, come to us to better both our races as the Jooliy have done and you will be welcomed. But come to us in anger or with ill intent, or in an effort to harm us or our friends, regardless of race, and you will find us to be a thousand times worse than the monsters that you imagine us to be."

The room was silent. The Council members looked to be in shock. "Halvnit, we are here to escort you home, and then take you and your family to your new offices as the Jooliy ambassador to Earth." Susan said this with practiced calm and clarity.

Halvnit stood, and spoke for the last time in the council. "It is at this time that the Jooliy people will resign their seat in the council. We thank the Council for its efforts and aid in the past and look forward to a cooperative relationship with each race on individual terms in the future. Thank you." The small furry man stood, dropping from his seat to walk down to Susan and the four marines, and left the Council in shambles.

In the hall, Hilvnit struggled not to look back. "Is this the right thing for my people?" he muttered to himself.

"Hilvnit, I want to tell you something." Susan said as she and the marines walked at a snail's pace to accommodate the small being's tiny legs. "No one is ever able to make every member of even a small group happy, there will always be those that disagree with how things should be done."

She stopped then kneeling down so that she could see into the teddy bear-like eyes that he possessed. "But you have two choices in this life, to quote another human parable, you can make progress or make excuses, but those are your only choices. And to quote my father, once you figure out the important things, the rest is small potatoes. You and your people decided that you valued your lives more than the apparent value of the council, and there is nothing wrong with that. Welcome, my friend, to a whole new life." Susan stood and walked away leading Hilvnit to think on her words.

*"It's a brave new world."*

-Howard Kurtz

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**From the Author:**

Hello! Thanks for the read, I really appreciate it, and I hope you enjoyed this as much as I enjoyed writing it. This story has been floating around my head for a bit, and thanks to insomnia I finally got it out of there (lord knows I have enough going on in there :)) As always I hope you have an excellent day!